

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Liberia

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

8700 Centreville Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Manassas

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Virginia

VICINITY OF

CODE

51

Eighth (Herbert E. Harris, II)

COUNTY

(in city)

CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

☒ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

I. J. & Hilda Breeden

STREET & NUMBER

8817 Fortner Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Manassas

VICINITY OF

STATE

Virginia 22110

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Prince William County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Manassas

STATE

Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (3) (See Continuation Sheet #1)

TITLE

(1) Historic American Buildings Survey

has this property been
determined eligible? ☒ Y ☐ N

DATE

1936

☒

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Liberia is a two-story, five-bay brick house located on a tree-planted hill on an undeveloped parcel of land in the city of Manassas about one mile north of the business district. The brick is laid in Flemish bond on the front, and in four-course American bond on the ends and back. Unfortunately the brickwork has been poorly repointed. Interior walls are also brick. The roof has parapet gable ends with corbeled shoulders and is covered with asphalt shingles. A single, concealed chimney is located in each gable end. A modern two-story colonnaded portico runs part way across the front of the house, and there is a one-story, enclosed frame porch with a gable roof on the rear of the house.

Exterior decorative features include a molded brick cornice with a saw-tooth design, quarter-round chimney closet windows in the gable ends, jack arches over the windows and a circular-arched doorway (front and rear) with a semicircular fanlight. Doorways front and rear are recessed and paneled. Large initials "WI" appear on the northeast gable end in glazed bricks.

The plan of this single-pile farmhouse is that of an "I" house with a modified central passage. The open-well stair is located to the rear and left of the central passage. There is a small study in the room behind the stair, and the kitchen is located in the corresponding room on the right of the central hall behind the dining room.

Liberia's noteworthy interior woodwork includes a keyed, elliptical molded arch in the central passage leading to the concealed stair. The arch is ornamented with pendant-like motifs. Both the paneled front and rear doors are surmounted by a keyed, molded semicircular fan arch. A molded baseboard decorated with a circular cutout design is found both in the central hall and the parlor (southwest room). The open-string stair has a molded banister, a slender colonette newel, two rectangular balusters per tread, and scrolled brackets. Symmetrically molded trim with turned cornerblocks is found throughout the house. The doors in the hall and throughout the house are six-panel.

The mantel in the southwest room consists of a molded shelf supported by consoles resting on pairs of slender, reeded, engaged columns, which rest on molded rectangular blocks. A diagonally reeded architrave surrounds the fireplace. The frieze has a dog-ear motif in all four corners.

The dining room, or northeast room, contains a plainer mantel--an architrave surround and a molded shelf supported on either side by a single engaged column resting on a molded rectangular base.

There are no surviving early outbuildings at Liberia except for a stone spring house located about fifty yards northeast of the house. There is a cemetery north of the house which contains the graves of members of the Weir family who died during the mid-19th century. Behind the house are the remains of an early 20th-century dairy barn, a small tenant house, and other 20th-century farm buildings.

The property being nominated consists of a rectangle measuring about 1800 feet by 1200 feet.

The remainder of the property will soon be developed. Construction will probably affect in part the present tree-lined approach to the house and the pond to the southeast of the house beside the present driveway.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

c. 1825

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Liberia is an early 19th-century brick, Federal farmhouse which is noteworthy for its architecture, its fine interior trim, and its excellent state of preservation. Liberia has its origins with the renowned Carters of Virginia. The property achieved prominence during the Civil War when it was used as headquarters by both Confederate and Union forces. Both Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis, in addition to other statesmen, visited Liberia during the War.

Liberia, a sophisticated rural, Federal-style brick farmhouse with antecedents in the classic Tidewater plantation house, is one of the few remaining houses of its type in Prince William County.¹ The land was originally part of vast acreage patented in 1724 by the agent for the Northern Neck proprietary, Robert "King" Carter, who patented as much as 90,000 acres in the present counties of Prince William, Fauquier and Fairfax in the names of his sons, grandsons and others. The 6,730-acre Lower Bull Run Tract was divided into 12 plantations, each named after a sign of the zodiac. Liberia, the only mansion from this tract which still retains its name, was built on the 1,660-acre "Libra" plantation in about 1825 by William Weir, whose wife Harriet Bladen Mitchell was a granddaughter of Robert "King" Carter. Liberia and Ben Lomond are the only remaining "Carter" houses of the dozen or so that existed in this region during the late 18th and 19th centuries. Portisi, Pittsylvania, Sudley, Sunnyside, Bleak Hill, Hazel Plain, Red Hill, Woodland and Mountain View were all Carter houses of comparable, if not finer, quality that no longer exist.

Although it is presently located within the boundaries of Manassas, which was incorporated in 1873,² Liberia was standing well before the early days of Manassas, which had its origins in the 1850s as a junction on the Orange and Alexandria Railway. The house withstood the ravages of the Civil War; when Manassas was burned twice, in March 1862 by General J. E. Johnson and in August 1862 by General Jackson, Liberia alone was left standing amidst the burning rubble.

It was during the Civil War period that Liberia achieved prominence. In June 1861, General P. G. T. Beauregard became commander of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia at the First Battle of Manassas. Beauregard founded Camp Pickens on Liberia's grounds and, between July and September 1861, he made the Weir house his headquarters. President Jefferson Davis visited Liberia on July 21, 1861, when, after the First Battle of Manassas, he met with Generals Johnston and Beauregard for a council of war.

About a year later, Liberia was used as Union headquarters by General Irvin McDowell, then commander of Union forces in Northern Virginia. President Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton visited McDowell at Liberia on June 19, 1862 after McDowell had suffered injuries in a fall from his horse. Two days later, Secretary of State William Seward is said to have visited McDowell at Liberia.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Farrar, Emmie F. and Hines, Emilee. Old Virginia Houses Along the Fall Line. New York: Hastings House, 1971.
- Hanson, Joseph M. Bull Run Remembers... The History, Traditions and Landmarks of the Manassas (Rull Run) Campaigns Before Washington 1861-1862. Manassas, Va: National Publishers, Inc. 1953.
- Ratcliffe, R. Jackson. This Was Prince William. Privately published by R. J. Ratcliffe, 1978. (See Continuation Sheet #1)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 52

UTM REFERENCES

QUADRANGLE NAME Manassas, Va.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

A 1,8 2,8,6,1,3,0 4,2,9,3,8,1,0
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C 1,8 2,8,6,3,3,0 4,2,9,3,1,9,0

B 1,8 2,8,6,5,5,0 4,2,9,3,4,8,0
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D 1,8 2,8,5,9,0,0 4,2,9,3,5,3,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point 2100' SW of the intersection of State Routes 28 and 213, 1.4 mi. W of Southern Railroad tracks, thence extending 1800' SSE to N side of State Route 28; thence following said side of said route 1200' SSW; thence extending 1800' NNW through small pond; thence extending 1200' NNE to point of origin.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY (2) (See Continuation Sheet #2)

NAME / TITLE

(1) Frances Jones, Architectural Historian/Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Northern Virginia Planning District Commission

DATE

September 1979

STREET & NUMBER

7309 Arlington Boulevard

TELEPHONE

(703) 573-2210

CITY OR TOWN

Falls Church

STATE

Virginia 22042

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Tucker Hill, Executive Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

DEC 18 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Liberia, Manassas, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER 6,8,9 PAGE 1

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory
1959 Federal
Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
- (3) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey
1969, 1979 State
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

8. SIGNIFICANCE

In November 1862, General Daniel E. Sickles used Liberia as headquarters while guarding the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, a major supply line for the Union forces.

Liberia's history is linked with the name of one of its post-Civil War owners, Robert Portner, a German immigrant and inventor. A self-made millionaire, Portner established a large brewery in Alexandria in 1864. Portner also had financial interests in railroads, shipbuilding, and land development. During the latter part of the 19th century, Portner bought large amounts of property in the Manassas area, including the Liberia tract, and became a gentleman farmer. About a mile south of Liberia, he built Annaburg, a 35-room mansion which he used as a weekend country retreat. (In recent years, Annaburg has become the central core of a nursing home). Portner installed his farm manager in Liberia, preferring to build a new, commodious residence to house his own large family. In the late 1940s the Portner heirs sold the vast Annaburg estate. The Liberia farm, Annaburg, and other property were sold to Liberia's present owner, I. J. Breeden, who subdivided the parcels, creating the residential developments that now surround both properties, and took up residence in a restored Liberia.

Both the City of Manassas and Prince William County recognize the importance of Liberia. Residents of both jurisdictions consider Liberia an important regional landmark worth preserving. To signify this, a plaque describing Liberia and set in a stone marker in front of the house has been erected by the county. The City of Manassas, in an effort to preserve Liberia and a portion of its present rural setting, has elected to declare Liberia a historical zone in its first exercise of the city's historic district ordinance. The owner of Liberia is cooperating with the city to protect this important landmark.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

FJ

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Templeman, Eleanor Lee and Netherton, Nan. Northern Virginia Heritage. Privately published by E. L. Templeman, 1966.
Works Progress Administration. Prince William: The Story of Its People and Its Places. Manassas: Bethlehem Good Housekeeping Club, 1941. Reprinted 1961.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Liberia, Manassas, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #2

ITEM NUMBER 11, 8 PAGE 1

11. FORM PREPARED BY

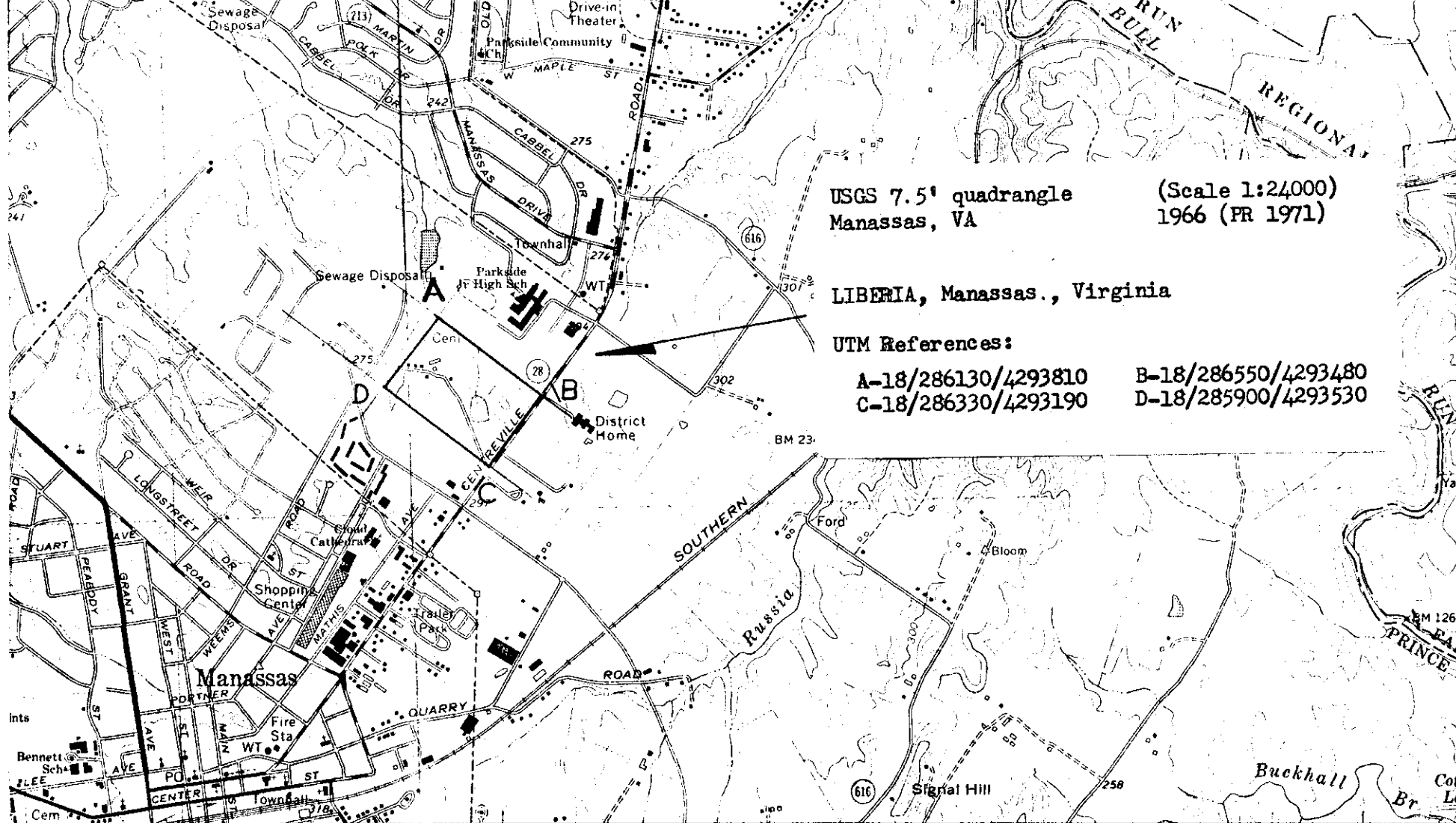
- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

December 1979
(804) 786-3144

8. SIGNIFICANCE

¹Liberia presently lies within the City of Manassas. Prior to its becoming an independent city in 1975, Manassas was an incorporated town in Prince William County.

²Manassas was incorporated as a town in 1873 and became an independent city in 1975.



USGS 7.5' quadrangle
Manassas, VA

(Scale 1:24000)
1966 (PR 1971)

LIBERIA, Manassas., Virginia

UTM References:

A-18/286130/4293810
C-18/286330/4293190

B-18/286550/4293480
D-18/285900/4293530

290 000 FEET
INDEPENDENT HILL 9 MI.
17 MI. TO INTERSTATE 95

logical Survey

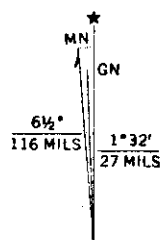
erial photographs
m aerial photographs

tum
ystem, north zone
ticks.

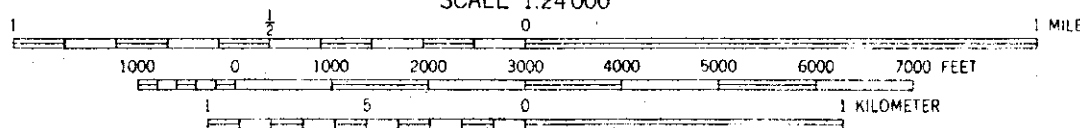
d field lines where
formation is unchecked

buildings are shown
photographs

d



UTM GRID AND 1966 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST